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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Letter dated 29 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, on behalf of the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the report of the Committee's twenty-seventh ministerial meeting, held from 13 to 15 May 2008 in Luanda, Republic of Angola (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 92 (f), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ismael Abraão **Gaspar Martins**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/63/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 29 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on its twenty-seventh ministerial meeting

Luanda, 15 May 2008

Introduction

1. The twenty-seventh ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Luanda, Republic of Angola, from 13 to 15 May 2008.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the Republic of Chad.

3. The secretariat of the Committee was comprised of members of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. The following entities participated as observers: United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD-CA), Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (RECSA), and International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF).

4. The opening and closing statements were delivered by Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola.

5. The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs;
- A message from the Secretary-General of ECCAS, read out by Mr. Antonio Egidio de Sousa Santos, Under-Secretary-General for Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability.

Summary of proceedings

I. Adoption of the agenda

6. The meeting at which the agenda was adopted was chaired by Mr. Henri Eyebé Ayissi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon, in his capacity as outgoing Bureau Chairman.

7. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda of the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman.
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some States members of the Committee:
   (i) Burundi;
   (ii) Central African Republic;
   (iii) Republic of Chad, along with the report on the Bahr-El-Gazal joint military exercise;
   (iv) Democratic Republic of the Congo.
5. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:
   (i) Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations;
   (ii) Briefing by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs: implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative; preparations for the 2008 biennial meeting on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; Regional Workshop to Support the Implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (Nairobi, 10-11 December 2007); United Nations Workshop on Implementing Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa (Gaborone, 27-28 November 2007).
6. Report by the ECCAS secretariat on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms (status of ratification of the protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa).
7. Report on the activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.
8. Date of the next meeting.
9. Other matters.
10. Adoption of the report of the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau

8. Mr. Henri Eyebé Ayissi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon, chaired the meeting at which the incoming Bureau was elected, in his capacity as outgoing Bureau Chairman.

9. The Committee elected a Bureau comprised of the following countries:

- Chairman: Republic of Angola
- First Vice-Chairman: Gabonese Republic
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of Chad
- Rapporteur: Central African Republic.

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman

10. The Committee noted with interest the report on the activities of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman. It commended the dynamism with which the Bureau had performed its duties and, in particular, its active contribution, in cooperation with the secretariat, to the preparation and organization of the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some States members of the Committee

11. The review of the geopolitical and security situation in some States members of the Committee revealed sharp contrasts in developments in Central Africa, particularly in the countries covered in the review, since the Committee's last meeting. While remarkable progress had been achieved in some countries that had once been the scene of armed conflict, persistent tensions, the deteriorating security situation and, very often, the resurgence of armed confrontations were stark reminders that peace was fragile in the countries covered.

12. The humanitarian and human rights situation also continued to be a serious source of concern in several parts of Central Africa.

13. That situation made it imperative for the parties concerned, the other countries of the subregion and the international community to take the necessary steps to bring about national reconciliation, consolidate peace and usher in a new era that would enable peoples who had suffered for too long from the scourge of war to flourish.

14. In accordance with the agenda, the delegations of the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported on the geopolitical and security situation in their respective countries.

15. The Committee also took note of the statement by the delegation of Cameroon describing the geopolitical and security situation in that country.

(i) Republic of Burundi

16. The Committee took note of the formation of a new Government following the reshuffling that took place on 14 November 2007, which made possible the strict application of article 129 of the Constitution, as demanded by some political parties represented in the National Assembly.

17. The Committee condemned the recent attacks perpetrated by the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL) against innocent populations in the capital, Bujumbura, in violation of the ceasefire agreement signed on 7 September 2006. The attacks resulted in loss of human life and significant material damage, including damage to the Apostolic Nuncio's residence.

18. The Committee urged the Government, Palipehutu-FNL and all other political actors to give priority to dialogue with a view to finding solutions to all outstanding problems and to take in good faith all steps necessary for the full implementation of the agreement.

19. The Committee launched a new appeal to the international community and to donors to provide Burundi with all the support it needed to tackle the serious socio-economic and security problems it faced.

(ii) Central African Republic

20. The Committee took note with satisfaction of the recent signing at Libreville, on 9 May 2008, of a ceasefire and peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD). The agreement was concluded under the auspices of Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, in his capacity as Chairman of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) ad hoc committee on Central African issues and in the presence of Mr. François Lonseny Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic.

21. The Committee welcomed the submission of the report of the preparatory committee for the inclusive political dialogue, whose two main characteristics would be the participation of representatives of the armed rebel groups and mediation by a body specializing in conflict resolution, in the interest of neutrality. It encouraged the parties involved to continue making efforts to bring the dialogue to fruition.

22. The Committee also welcomed the developments reflected in the document submitted by the Central African Republic, particularly with regard to the deployment of the European Union operation under the terms of Security Council resolution 1778 (2007).

23. The Committee again expressed deep concern at the persisting insecurity, caused in particular by the ongoing banditry of "roadblockers" in the north of the country, and at acts of violence against civilians. It likewise expressed concern at the presence of Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army elements in the south-east and at the use of that region of the country as a crossing to neighbouring countries.

24. On the issue of human rights, the Committee encouraged the Government to pursue its efforts to combat impunity and reduce the number of extrajudicial killings, as recommended by the Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Human Rights Council following his visit to the country.

(iii) Republic of Chad

25. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Chadian delegation concerning the 240,000 Sudanese refugees living in the eastern region of the country and the presence of armed rebel groups among them. It expressed satisfaction at the deployment, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1778 (2007), of a joint United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)-European Union international force in eastern Chad mandated to provide security to Sudanese refugee camps and humanitarian workers.

26. The Committee also took note of the signing of a non-aggression and peace agreement by the Presidents of Chad and the Sudan on 13 March 2008, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. A contact group had been formed and had held a meeting in Libreville and another in Tripoli in the absence of the Sudanese Head of State.

27. The Committee expressed concern at the deterioration of relations between Chad and the Sudan and called upon both nations to re-establish dialogue, which should facilitate African Union joint mediation efforts and the implementation of the Dakar Agreement. The Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the extraordinary summit of ECCAS Heads of State and Government on the situation in Chad, held in Kinshasa in March 2008.

28. In cooperation with Chad, the Committee launched an urgent appeal to the international community to resolve the Darfur crisis, and requested the United Nations to reactivate the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) disarmament project known as "Small Arms Project", which ceased to operate in 2006. It also called for measures to strengthen the capacity of security services in the subregion to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and for the establishment of appropriate border patrol mechanisms in the subregion.

29. The Committee had requested the ECCAS secretariat to produce a report on the Bahr-El-Gazal joint military exercise, in which all States members of the Committee took part. Consideration of the report was deferred to the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting.

(iv) Democratic Republic of the Congo

30. The Committee welcomed the signature on 23 January 2008, by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the rebel armed groups, of the Goma statement of commitment (*Acte d'engagement*) and of the Amani programme for peace, pacification, stability and development in the provinces of North and South Kivu; it urged all parties to work in good faith towards the prompt implementation of those texts.

31. The Committee welcomed the round table held in Kinshasa from 18 to 20 February 2008 on security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the start of judicial reform.

32. It also welcomed the Nairobi joint communiqué signed on 9 November 2007 by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda, which set out a common approach to ending the threat to peace and stability in both countries and in the Great Lakes region.

33. However, the Committee expressed deep concern at the deteriorating security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the Ituri region, and called upon the armed groups to turn in their weapons and participate unconditionally in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation process.

34. The Committee took due note of the information on the deplorable consequences of Mbororo nomad migrations in parts of the eastern province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, the Committee endorsed the recommendations made by the African Union fact-finding mission on that issue, in particular on the holding of a meeting of the countries concerned, as soon as possible under the auspices of the African Union, as provided for in the communiqué issued on 11 April 2008 at the 119th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

(v) Republic of Cameroon

35. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Cameroonian delegation on the peace and security situation in that country. It welcomed the fact that the measures taken recently by the Cameroonian authorities to improve the population's purchasing power, particularly the reduction of tariffs on essential commodities and the increase in Government employees' salaries, had significantly contributed to reducing social tensions.

36. It took note of the National Assembly's recent adoption, by a vast majority, of a constitutional amendment introduced by the Government, as well as of Government efforts to combat corruption. The Committee expressed concern at the ongoing criminal activities of "roadblockers" in some border areas in Cameroon, and called upon security forces in that country to continue making efforts to combat that phenomenon, in concert with neighbouring countries. It also welcomed Cameroon's contribution to the deployment of the European Union operation and the Central African Multinational Force in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic.

37. The Committee appealed to bilateral and multilateral donors to provide Cameroon with the support needed to deal with the refugee influx in the north, as a result of developments in Chad. It also called upon donors to provide the necessary support to affected countries and humanitarian organizations in order to ensure that refugees could return promptly to their home countries.

V. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

(i) Proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and disarmament of civilian populations

38. The Committee noted with interest the information provided by Angola on the situation concerning small arms and light weapons proliferation in that country, as well as on the four-phase civilian disarmament programme launched by the Government.

(ii) Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

Code of conduct for Central African defence and security forces

39. The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the preliminary draft code of conduct for defence and security forces in Central Africa.

40. The document submitted contained elements for inclusion in a code of conduct. The document was based on similar drafts prepared by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and, more recently, Togo.

41. However, the Regional Centre made an effort to address a number of characteristics specific to Central Africa that States would continue to supplement as the text was developed.

42. The general principles and guidelines set out in the preliminary draft code of conduct focused primarily on reaffirming the separate roles and responsibilities of the armed forces and security forces in a democratic republic.

43. Those principles were also intended to facilitate dialogue between civilians and the military in a subregion where armed conflicts had eroded the civilian population's trust.

44. Following the presentation, the Committee undertook to transmit its comments to the secretariat along with input for finalizing the code of conduct, with a view to adopting it at the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting.

Legal instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa

45. With regard to the component of the Sao Tome Initiative on the development and adoption of a legal instrument to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, the Committee noted with satisfaction the presentation of the ECCAS-commissioned study on the methodology that should be considered in order to develop and adopt the legal instrument and its plan of action.

46. The Committee commended the quality of the research conducted by the ECCAS consultant, in the context of its cooperation with the United Nations, in order to effectively develop the legal instrument.

47. Discussions took place on the origins of the Sao Tome Initiative and the methodology adopted and reaffirmed at the Committee's twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth ministerial meetings. According to the planned schedule, the development process should take two years, in order to reflect the conclusion of the work in a United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted at its sixty-fourth regular session.

48. In light of similar instruments developed in other African subregions, as well as global instruments, such as the Vienna Protocol on Firearms, the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument on small arms and light weapons, but also given the lack of progress in implementing the programme of priority activities adopted in Brazzaville, the Committee strongly reaffirmed its decision to create a legally binding instrument for the subregion.

49. The discussions also highlighted the importance of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, and of monitoring of the instrument by ECCAS.

50. The Committee welcomed the important advances made in developing the instrument and encouraged its secretariat to provide it with a draft text containing elements drawn from relevant legal instruments.

51. Lastly, the Committee appealed to international partners, and donors in particular, to provide financial support for that initiative, which aimed to promote peace and stability.

(iii) Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons and related issues

52. The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on preparations for the July 2008 biennial meeting on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The biennial meeting would focus in particular on illicit brokering, marking, tracing, stockpile management, assistance and cooperation.

53. The Committee encouraged all States to discuss, at the biennial meeting, the problems they faced and the assistance they needed in implementing the Programme of Action. The Committee also urged States to submit their national reports to the Office for Disarmament Affairs and to clearly convey their financial, material and human resource needs in their statements at the biennial meeting. Indeed, circulating information on States' actual assistance needs would allow their potential partners, including donors and non-governmental organizations, to develop more appropriate assistance programmes.

54. The Committee also took note of the briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the conduct of three training workshops on the universalization of the International Tracing Instrument on small arms and light weapons. The Central African States had been among those invited to the workshops, which had been financed by the European Union and held from 10 to 11 December 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, and from 17 to 18 April 2008 in Lomé, Togo.

55. Those workshops had given the participants a better understanding of the obligations contained in the Instrument. They had also helped State representatives to determine how and from whom to seek technical assistance. Lastly, the INTERPOL Weapons Electronic Tracing System (IWeTS) simulation had allowed participants to gain practical experience.

56. The Committee noted that the International Tracing Instrument, developed in 2006 in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action, would also be discussed at the biennial meeting. Therefore, the Committee encouraged States to include information on the traceability of small arms and light weapons in their national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

57. Furthermore, the Committee took note of the United Nations Security Council meeting held on 30 April 2008 to consider the first report of the Secretary-General to the Council on issues relating to small arms and light weapons (S/2008/258) and the 13 recommendations made in the report. It noted that such meetings would henceforth be held biannually and on the same schedule as the meetings on the

Programme of Action, with the aim of strengthening the synergies between the two mechanisms. In that connection, it expressed its satisfaction with the fact that the Republic of the Congo had informed the Security Council of the Committee's development of a legally binding instrument for Central Africa.

58. Lastly, the Committee also took note of the presentation given by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the training workshops on the universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons held at Lomé from 21 to 25 April 2008. The workshops had been organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa with financial support from the European Union. The Committee strongly encouraged States to ratify that Convention.

(iv) Implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa

59. The Committee took note of the briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the implementation in Africa of resolution 1540 (2004), adopted by the Security Council on 28 April 2004, which emphasized efforts to combat terrorism and the use of and trafficking in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery by non-State actors.

60. It noted with interest the information on the workshop held in Botswana in November 2007, which had been attended by some Central African countries that had not participated in the 2006 Accra workshop.

61. The Committee also welcomed the Programme of Action developed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its capacity as coordinator of the African Group on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

62. Lastly, the Committee encouraged States to submit their national transparency reports on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

VI. Report by the ECCAS secretariat on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms

63. The Committee took note of the briefing by the ECCAS secretariat on the main activities conducted recently in the areas of peace, security and human integration.

64. It welcomed the progress achieved and the measures taken by ECCAS in the areas of mediation, combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, child protection and human trafficking prevention, promotion and protection of human rights, electoral assistance to member States, crisis prevention and resolution, and operational capacity-building for the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC).

VII. Report on the activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

65. The Committee took note with interest of the activity report submitted by the Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

66. The Committee commended the broader partnership between the Centre and the States of the subregion, the Centre's increasing visibility and the revitalization of its activities. With regard to the support provided by the Centre to the Governments of the subregion, the Committee expressed satisfaction with the Centre's promotion, protection and follow-up activities on human rights and democracy. It also approved of the Centre's contribution to capacity-building of member States and civil society actors in the areas of human rights and democracy.

67. The Committee reiterated its support for the Centre's activities and expressed a wish for increased collaboration on peace and security in the subregion.

VIII. Date and place of the next meeting

68. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-eighth ministerial meeting in Libreville, Gabonese Republic. The Gabonese delegation informed the Committee that, due to a very busy internal schedule, the Gabonese Republic expected that the twenty-eighth meeting would be held during the first week of September and that the secretariat would be informed of the exact dates later. However, it was agreed that the host country, the Bureau and the secretariat of the Committee should hold consultations to determine the exact date of the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting.

IX. Other matters

69. The Committee once again commended the partnership between the Office for Disarmament Affairs and ECCAS; in that connection, it expressed renewed confidence in ECCAS and requested it to prepare the geopolitical review, an internal document that would provide a basis for discussions on that agenda item during the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting. It requested that the document should take States' national contributions into account, clearly cite the information sources used and be circulated to member States not later than two weeks prior to the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting.

70. The Committee took note of the briefing by the Central African Republic on Mbororo nomad migrations. It also took note of the positions reiterated by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lastly, it considered the communiqué issued at the 119th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, held on 11 April 2008.

71. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Office for Disarmament Affairs regarding the financial difficulties that it faced in organizing the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting. It expressed concern at the insufficient resources allocated under the United Nations regular budget, the increase in costs that had had an impact on the organization of the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting and the fact that there had been no voluntary contribution to the Committee Trust Fund. It vowed to make every effort to address that situation as soon as possible. It launched an appeal to the international community, with a particular emphasis on its partners, to continue to support the Committee and urged member States to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund in order to enable the Committee to pursue its activities.

72. The Committee decided to include the financial situation issue on the agenda of the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting, to be held in Libreville, Gabonese Republic.

73. The Committee took note of the Chairman's statement on the need to streamline the Committee's activities by examining its role and responsibilities. Such collective reflection on the part of the Committee should address in particular its areas of competence and those of the relevant subregional bodies, as well as their composition, their interactions and ways to optimize resource management. The Committee also raised the possibility of further involving potential donors and working to increase the visibility of the Committee's achievements.

74. The Committee decided that a working paper on its origins, mandate, achievements and future prospects should be considered at the Libreville ministerial meeting. It requested the Committee's secretariat to prepare the part of the paper that dealt with its origins, mandate and achievements, and it appointed Cameroon as ad hoc working paper coordinator to prepare the portion on future prospects. To that end, it requested all member States to submit their national contributions to Cameroon, which would incorporate them into the final document to be circulated to States by the Committee secretariat not later than two weeks prior to the meeting.

X. Adoption of the report of the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting

75. The Committee adopted the present report on 15 May 2008.

76. The participants commended the propitious atmosphere that had prevailed throughout the meeting. The following expression of thanks was read out:

> "We, the representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, assembled for the twenty-seventh ministerial meeting, held from 13 to 15 May 2008 in Luanda, Republic of Angola,
>
> Reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of peace, security and stability deeply cherished by our respective peoples and to the socio-economic development of our subregion,
>
> Commend the individual and collective efforts of our countries to achieve peace, security, stability and development,
>
> Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust which has prevailed throughout our work, and
>
> Express our sincere thanks and deep gratitude to His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, and to the Government and people of Angola for the warm welcome and fraternal hospitality we have received during our stay in Angola."

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Security Council

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Report by the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the representative of Belgium on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received credentials signed on 1 June 2008 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, stating that Mr. Jan Grauls has been appointed representative of Belgium on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, these credentials are in order.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 3 June 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 March 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

08-36609 (E) 120608

Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. This report covers the period from 1 to 31 March 2008.

2. As at 31 March 2008, the total number of troops in theatre was 15,678. This includes 2,496 troops from non-NATO countries.

Political situation

3. At their meeting on 6 and 7 March, NATO Foreign Ministers reiterated that the Kosovo Force (KFOR) would continue fulfilling its security responsibilities throughout Kosovo under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

4. The Cabinet of the Serbian Prime Minister, Vojislav Kostunica, sent a proposal for the dissolution of Parliament to President Boris Tadic on 10 March 2008, and suggested that new parliamentary elections be held on 11 May 2008.

Security situation

5. On 3 March, 250 Kosovo Serbs gathered at the railway station in Zvecan and stopped train traffic for 20 minutes. The demonstration ended peacefully.

6. On 6 March, a French soldier was evacuated after being accidentally caught between two trucks at the petrol station in Novo Selo Compound.

7. On 6 and 7 March, Kosovo Albanians gathered in Urosevac and Gornje Prekaze for their annual "Night of Fire" commemoration to honour their war heroes. The monument to the Kosovo Albanian war hero Jashari in Gornje Prekaze was the final venue, with 50,000 participants on 7 March 2008.

8. On 9 March in Petrastica, 500 Kosovo Albanians gathered to celebrate Kosovo's declaration of independence.

9. On 10 March, approximately 50 Kosovo Serbs gathered peacefully outside the courthouse in northern Mitrovica with Serbian flags.

10. On 12 March, an explosion occurred in Istok destroying two shops, but no casualties were reported.

11. On 13 March, in Leposavic, an explosion damaged two vehicles in front of the local cultural house.

12. On 14 March, approximately 150 Kosovo Serbs gathered in front of the courthouse in Mitrovica and some entered the courthouse yard, raising the Serbian flag at a window.

13. On 15 March, approximately 50 Kosovo Serbs gathered in the courthouse yard and on the courthouse balcony with Serbian and United Nations flags. Approximately 20 people stayed overnight inside the building. In Podujevo, an unknown person threw a Molotov cocktail in the car park of a hotel. No casualties were reported.

14. On 17 March, after a formal request for support from UNMIK to KFOR, an operation to retake the courthouse was launched by UNMIK police supported by

KFOR. Seven platoons of the UNMIK formed police unit took part. UNMIK police arrested 35 Kosovo Serb protesters, while KFOR blocked off nearby roads. With KFOR assistance to clear the route, UNMIK police delivered the detainees to the detention facility in Pristina. However, as UNMIK attempted to transport the detainees to Pristina for processing, a large crowd gathered and started to throw stones, Molotov cocktails, grenades and other objects at the security forces; AK-47 rifles and pistols were also fired. UNMIK police and KFOR responded to the violence using tear gas, baton rounds and warning shots using live rounds in accordance with the agreed rules of engagement. In the end, 48 KFOR soldiers, 7 officers of the Kosovo Police Service and 35 UNMIK police officers were wounded, including a Ukrainian police officer who later died of his wounds. UNMIK police temporarily withdrew from northern Mitrovica, leaving KFOR to re-establish control of the courthouse and all areas in northern Mitrovica. The situation returned to calm, although around 400 protestors remained in the area.

15. On 19 March, UNMIK police and the Kosovo Police Service resumed normal operations in northern Mitrovica with KFOR support.

16. On 20 March, in Pec, an unknown person threw a hand grenade which exploded in the yard of a house owned by a Kosovo Albanian family. No casualties were reported.

17. On 28 March, Multinational Task Force North sent a patrol after a shot was reported against an UNMIK/Kosovo Police Service checkpoint in Zvecan. Nobody was injured and no evidence was found. The investigation is ongoing.

18. On 29 March, one Molotov cocktail was thrown at the head office of Norwegian Church Aid (humanitarian organization) in Mitrovica. Only one broken window was reported. In Pristina, two United Nations vehicles were slightly damaged by unknown persons.

19. On 30 March in Suvido, approximately 20 Kosovo Serbs and an unknown number of Kosovo Albanians threw stones at each other. They dispersed after one hour.

20. On 31 March, there was a shooting incident in Suvido. Cartridge cases were found on both the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb side. A KFOR platoon and a KFOR reconnaissance helicopter were sent to support the Kosovo Police Service. No casualties were reported. The investigation is still ongoing but the incident is probably related to a land dispute.

21. A total of 474 incidents relating to drugs (14), counterfeit currency or documents (57), smuggling (33), explosions (5), miscellaneous criminal incidents (212), illegal weapons possession (46), weapons and ammunition seizures (32) and unexploded ordnance (75) were reported during this period, significantly more than in February 2008 (381).

KFOR operations

22. After the violence on 17 March, the overall security situation returned to a relative calm in the south while tension remains high in the north. UNMIK police presence was re-established at the courthouse in northern Mitrovica. The daily demonstrations continue in Mitrovica and in the Kosovo Serb enclaves. Multinational Task Force North was reinforced by the Italian Operational Reserve

Force battalion until 18 March, immediately followed by the German/Austrian Operational Reserve Force battalion from 15 March, two tactical reserve companies from Multinational Task Force West and one Kosovo tactical manoeuvre reserve company. The Multinational Specialized Unit conducted Operation Proximity in Multinational Task Force Centre to enhance the population's sense of safety.

Compliance

23. At its meeting on 27 March, the Disciplinary Board examined seven major acts of non-compliance with the KFOR Commander's statement of principles and UNMIK regulation 1999/8. All seven members of the Kosovo Protection Corps were dismissed.

Kosovo Protection Corps

24. There was no recruitment campaign for the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in March 2008.

25. The current active personnel establishment is 2,891. There are 188 (6.5 per cent) active ethnic minority members (164 male, 24 female). The percentage of minorities within the Kosovo Protection Corps remains short of the goal set by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. There are still 113 open posts left in the active personnel establishment list. The reserve list includes 2,000 positions with 1,892 filled (including 48 ethnic minority members, which equates to 2.45 per cent).

26. The KFOR inspectorate for KPC headquarters conducted a two-day firefighting seminar for members of KPC. An assessment of training activities was presented at a KPC training and doctrine seminar.

27. After a formal request for assistance by the Government of Albania, a KPC demining team left KPC headquarters on 22 March accompanied by two officers of the Office of the KPC Coordinator. The demining team had been allocated a housing area to clear, approximately 1 km from the blast site. The team received extensive media coverage on Albanian television and demonstrated a good image of KPC. The Commander of KPC even visited the KPC demining team in Albania on 27 and 28 March.

28. During the month of March 2008, there were 12 ceremonies involving 1,227 KPC members. No incidents were reported.

Conclusion

29. In the current calm but volatile security context, KFOR remains prepared to deal with unrest and will continue to respond adequately to any attempt to disrupt the safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo, regardless of where it comes from.

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Letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 3 June 2008 on the issue of participation of Russian military personnel in the rehabilitation of the railway infrastructure of Abkhazia, Georgia (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly I. **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

The participation of Russian military personnel in the rehabilitation of Abkhazia's railway infrastructure

3 June 2008

A new wave of anti-Russian clamour has arisen in Georgia. This time, the pretext chosen is the dispatch to Abkhazia of a Russian railway troop unit, outfitted with the necessary equipment (a special train with a system for full-scale railway conditioning) to repair the Sukhumi-Ochamchira section of the railway track. The exclusively humanitarian nature of this action has already been stressed in the announcements of the Russian authorities and statements of the Abkhaz side, which had invited the Russian railway personnel. It has been particularly emphasized that the military engineers are completely unarmed. Their tasks have been clearly formulated: to replace the cross ties, improve the state of the track, and repair the railway bridges over the Kodor and Mokva mountain rivers. Approximate targets for completion of the work have been set: from two to four months.

We believe it necessary to stress that the rehabilitation of the railway infrastructure in the territory of Abkhazia is fully in line with the Russian-Georgian accords. The negotiating process on this vitally important problem for the entire region was launched after a meeting of the Russian and Georgian Presidents at Sochi in March 2003, following which a working group on the issues of restoring rail connections through Abkhazia was set up. Among the positive results is a joint inspection of the Abkhaz section of the railway which has been carried out. After the December 2005 meeting of the Russian-Georgian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the sides embarked in earnest on the task of creating an international consortium for restoring train traffic through Abkhazia. This work was suspended after Georgian troops were brought into the upper part of the Kodori gorge in the summer of 2006, in violation of the international agreements.

It is obvious that the rehabilitation work being carried out by Russian military engineers not only corresponds to the aspirations of the people of Abkhazia, who for many long years now have been unable to achieve their inalienable right to a decent life because of the devastation left over from the Georgian-Abkhaz war, but would also indisputably serve the interests of the entire Caucasian region, including, of course, Georgia. It would therefore be a good thing if Georgian politicians could move on from meaningless invocations of a threat of annexation and intervention to practical steps for strengthening trust, the way to which lies through constructive and mutually advantageous cooperation.

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Letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you a concept paper for the Security Council debate on "women and peace and security: sexual violence in situations of armed conflict", to be held on 19 June 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Zalmay **Khalilzad**

08-36615 (E) 050608

Annex to the letter dated 4 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept Paper

Security Council thematic debate
19 June 2008

Women and peace and security: sexual violence in situations of armed conflict

Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, progress towards achieving its major goals has been slow and uneven. The participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes has not increased significantly, and the number of women military observers, civilian police, Envoys, and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in peacekeeping missions is still disappointingly low.

One important aspect of resolution 1325 (2000) which demands urgent attention by the international community is the call for all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and its emphasis on the need to end impunity for war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls.

Sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, in varying levels of intensity and severity, has occurred throughout history. Recent reporting indicates that brutal rapes are becoming increasingly commonplace in some conflict and post-conflict situations. Despite the Security Council's repeated condemnation and calls for the immediate cessation by all parties of acts of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, indications exist that thousands of women and girls are gang-raped, mutilated, or abducted into sexual slavery. Such atrocities, which often persist even after the signing of peace agreements between parties to an armed conflict, not only are violations of the human rights of the victims, but also undermine confidence in a peace process and raise huge barriers to successfully rebuilding a ruptured society in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. Sexual assaults against women, often committed in front of their husbands and/or children, not only inflict severe injury, but also may spread HIV/AIDS and other diseases and lead to a breakdown of traditional families and social order, exacerbating the chaos brought on by the conflict.

Rape is clearly defined as a war crime in international humanitarian law. The statute of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which the Security Council adopted by its resolution 827 (1993), gives the Tribunal the power to prosecute persons responsible for rape when committed in armed conflict, whether international or internal in character, and directed against any civilian population.

In the fifteen years since the establishment of the criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the problem of widespread, organized and systematic rape has continued and, if anything, has become more severe. In the eight years since the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, sexual violence as a weapon of war has been perpetrated with almost

universal impunity. Even though rape and sexual violence in situations of armed conflict are underreported by women victims, who often are ashamed to come forward and suffer public humiliation or rejection and may well doubt they will find adequate recourse to justice, United Nations sources on the ground have reported thousands of women who have sought medical help for the grievous wounds that have been inflicted upon them in the course of being raped by gangs of soldiers and other armed men. These injuries are so severe that in some cases victims are hospitalized for over a year. Thousands of women and girls, and their children, have been abandoned by their families and ostracized by their villages after surviving rape. For example, according to Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes, more than 32,000 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence have been registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's province of South Kivu alone.

The recent reporting on women affected by sexual violence in situations of armed conflict reveals a grave situation that requires a practical response from the international community. During the United States Presidency of the Security Council, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will chair a thematic debate at the ministerial level for members of the Council on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, as part of the Council's follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000). During the course of the debate, we suggest that participants may wish to focus on the following themes and questions:

Understanding the problem

- How to gather information from the field, including accounts of instances of sexual violence committed by the parties to armed conflict, information about the armed groups and armed forces responsible for such behaviour, and identification of specific patterns of violence perpetrated by each group.
- How to ensure more comprehensive reporting by the United Nations system on the scope and incidence of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, including through the incorporation of information from United Nations funds and programmes and other members of the United Nations country teams.
- How to bring about a change in societal attitudes and norms so that the perpetrators of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, rather than the survivors, are ostracized and viewed as having committed shameful acts.

Prevention and protection

- How Security Council mandates for peacekeeping operations might be strengthened to prevent sexual violence in situations of armed conflict and provide more protection for women and girls from widespread and systematic sexual attacks by parties to armed conflict.
- How the recruitment and deployment of more female peacekeepers and civilian police can be encouraged. For example, one possible model is the Indian all-women civilian police unit in Liberia.
- Whether the deployment of more women in the civilian components of peacekeeping missions could lead to better monitoring, reporting and response to incidents of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.

- What other special measures could be proposed and taken to protect women and girls from sexual violence, particularly rape, in situations of armed conflict.

Consequences for accused perpetrators

- How amnesty provisions in peace accords can be fine-tuned to take into account the need to end impunity for sexual violence.
- How local commanders and those above them in the military chain of command of armed parties to conflict can be held accountable for failing to take the necessary and reasonable measures either to prevent sexual violence against civilians or to punish the perpetrators thereof.
- How security sector reform and capacity-building for police and the judicial sector can better incorporate best practices for the effective prevention and prosecution of sexual crimes committed in situations of armed conflict.
- Whether there are any best practices on engaging with parties to armed conflict with a view to curbing sexual violence and ending impunity, including through the participation of women in peace negotiations or the highlighting of this problem during attempts to build truth and reconciliation mechanisms or other local justice mechanisms.

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 3 June 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you today regarding the serious, ongoing issue of illegal Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In total defiance and grave violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, United Nations resolutions and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and in total contradiction to the objectives and spirit of the renewed peace process, Israel, the occupying Power, continues and has intensified its settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Once again, we are witness to and subjected to the audacity of Israeli announcements of illegal colonial settlement construction, which has been incessant and has particularly targeted areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. Just two days ago, Israeli Housing Minister Ze'ev Boim announced over 880 new tenders in two illegal settlements, including that constructed on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Occupied East Jerusalem. Overall, since the Annapolis Conference seven months ago, despite its pledges and commitments to cease settlement activity, the Israeli Government has actually issued tenders for approximately 17,000 new housing units in illegal Israeli settlements across the Occupied West Bank, including in Occupied East Jerusalem.

It should be recalled that the Security Council's failure to address the settlement construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim in 1997, despite its extremely negative impact on the peace process and the situation on the ground, led to the General Assembly's convening of its tenth emergency special session. The expansion of this settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim or of any other Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, must thus be firmly opposed by the international community, as it represents a clear affront to the will of the community, which, in upholding international law, has consistently rejected these

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illegal settlements from the very first brick. In this regard, even the Quartet, from the outset, in its road map, has clearly called on Israel to freeze all settlement activity and dismantle all settlement "outposts".

Indeed, Israel's colonization campaign in its entirety — the settlements, the Wall, the bypass roads and all other measures intended to facilitate this campaign, including, inter alia, the confiscation of land, destruction of property and imposition of residency restrictions and a permit regime — constitutes a grave breach of international law, i.e. war crimes. Moreover, such illegal actions are destroying the territorial contiguity, integrity and unity of the Palestinian Territory, destroying the natural environment and destroying the chances for peace as they poison the atmosphere between the two sides, heighten tensions and frustrations, destabilize the situation on the ground and obstruct progress in the peace process.

This most recent declaration of continued settlement activity and expansion is regrettably yet additional proof of Israel's lack of commitment to the peace process and its terms of reference, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), in which the Council endorsed the road map, and the principle of land for peace. Peace cannot be achieved while Israel continues to colonize the land it occupied in 1967. Such illegitimate actions are totally contradictory to the concept of withdrawal, ending the occupation and land for peace. In fact, the continuation of such actions seriously undermines and threatens the prospects for the establishment of a physically viable and contiguous independent Palestinian State and thus the achievement of peace.

The international community must call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all settlement activities and to abide by all of its legal obligations. This must include respect for its obligations under international humanitarian law and for relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 465 (1980), in which the Council, inter alia, reiterated the call upon Israel to cease all settlement construction and to dismantle those settlements already built. Moreover, immediate and tangible confidence-building measures are necessary to indicate Israel's actual willingness to address this issue towards the ultimate achievement of a peaceful two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

We welcome your statement of concern regarding Israel's latest announcement of settlement expansion and the illegality of such actions. It is imperative that such gross, constant and grave violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, be firmly and consistently condemned and demands for their cessation be unequivocal. Continued tolerance for such crimes will only further undermine the rule of law in our international system to the detriment of all, which must be avoided.

Finally, with regard to this critical issue of the illegal settlements, I wish to draw special attention to the grave situation of Occupied East Jerusalem. Israel's attempts to change the character, demographic composition and status of East Jerusalem in order to completely isolate the city from the rest of the Palestinian Territory and forcibly annex it are totally illegal and not conducive to peace. East Jerusalem remains an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the illegality and invalidity of Israel's measure to colonize and annex the city have been rejected and declared null and void by both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The issue of Jerusalem remains a core final status issue that must be justly resolved in order to achieve a peaceful settlement. In the interest of peace and

justice, the international community must therefore exert urgent measures to protect East Jerusalem and halt all illegal Israeli measures and policies aimed at unilaterally determining the fate of the city, for there can be no peace without East Jerusalem as it is the capital and heart of the future Palestinian State.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 314 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 29 April 2008 (A/ES-10/418–S/2008/282), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda Abdelhady **Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Note by the President of the Security Council

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, the members agreed to elect the Chairmen of the following committees for the period ending 31 December 2008:

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

Jan Grauls (Belgium)

Burkina Faso and the Russian Federation will continue to serve as Vice-Chairmen for the said period.

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire

Jan Grauls (Belgium)

Italy and South Africa will continue to serve as Vice-Chairmen for the said period.

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006)

Jan Grauls (Belgium)

Burkina Faso and Costa Rica will continue to serve as Vice-Chairmen for the said period.

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